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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,
MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2004

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Basbug: "Secular and Moderate Islam Cannot Co-Exist" -
Milliyet (3/20)
Worldwide Protests on First Anniversary of Iraq War -
Hurriyet (3/21)
PM Erdogan: "We Want With Denktas in Switzerland" - Sabah
(3/21)
Al-Qaeda Possesses Portable Nuclear Bomb - Hurriyet
De Soto Meets Foreign Ministry Officials in Ankara -
Hurriyet
Nevruz Celebrated in Turkey - Sabah
De Soto in Ankara - Milliyet

OPINION MAKERS

First Anniversary of Iraq Operation - Radikal (3/20)
Basbug: "Turkey is A Secular Country" - Cumhuriyet (3/20)
'TRNC' Does Not Want Annan Plan - Cumhuriyet - (3/21)
Turkey Prepares For Talks in Switzerland Without Denktas -
Cumhuriyet
Nevruz Celebrated Without Incidents - Zaman
Erdogan Wants to Go to Switzerland With Denktas - Zaman
Schroeder: "Turkey is Important For Germany" - Radikal

BRIEFING

Cyprus: "Radikal" reports that UN Cyprus envoy De Soto came to Ankara on Sunday to discuss developments in Cyprus with Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Ugur Ziyal and other ministry officials. The sides agreed that a way must be found to overcome the risk that the agreement could be challenged in court once it is approved. De Soto stressed that the UN is in contact with the EU on this issue, and expressed understanding for Turkish concerns. Meanwhile, Turkish officials reviewed Turkey's Cyprus Road Map just before the four-party talks in Switzerland. "Cumhuriyet" notes that Turkey outlined its 'red lines' without consulting Denktas, and wants EU countries to solve the primary law problem during the summit in Brussels March 25-26. "Yeni Safak" reports that PM Erdogan stressed that he would prefer that Denktas participates in the four-party talks in Switzerland.

General Basbug Comments: At the end of his visit to the U.S., Deputy Chief of General Staff Ilker Basbug said that the PKK issue and GME project were at the top of his agenda in meetings with US officials. On GME, Basbug said that Turkey should not be used as a model for the region. General Basbug stressed that Turkey is a secular state, and cannot be a moderate Islamic state at the same time. In response to General Basbug's comments, PM Erdogan said that secularism is not a religion, and it cannot be compared to Islam. According to Erdogan, secularism is the guarantee that everyone can live in his own way based on his religious beliefs.

Osman Ocalan Takes Refuge with KDP: Today's "Yeni Safak" claims that Osman Ocalan and 300 members of his PKK splinter group have taken refuge in territory in Northern Iraq controlled by Barzani's KDP. The article noted that Ocalan was previously thought to have turned himself in to US forces in Iraq. "Yeni Safak" also notes that US forces foiled the latest effort to sabotage the Kerkuk-Yumurtalik

pipeline. US troops reportedly arrived at the site of the attempted sabotage in time to defuse the bomb that would have re-cut the flow of oil from Kerkuk.

EDITORIAL OPINION

"Red lines in Cyprus"

Cuneyt Ulsever observed in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (3/22): "The political establishment in the TRNC is openly inciting fears about the Annan Plan among settlers from the Turkish mainland. . The goal appears to be to stir up opposition against a referendum on the plan. Rauf Denktas' son Serdar will be the most critical figure in determining the outcome of the referendum. Within the pro-Denktas front, Serdar Denktas represents those who are more open to the UN-backed integration plan. Denktas Jr. will be manipulating those who have a sympathetic view of his father, but support the Annan Plan as well. Serdar Denktas is at a crossroads: He will either follow his father and be relegated to the history books, or he will become a new Denktas who carries Cyprus and Turkey to the future."

"Road to Switzerland"

Asli Aydintasbas wrote from Washington for the mass appeal "Sabah" (3/22): Washington believes that TRNC leader Rauf Denktas' absence at the Switzerland talks will not be a loss, but rather an advantage. . No one in Washington is bothered that Denktas is openly launching a campaign to reject the Annan Plan and staying out of the peace process. Washington believes that an agreement supported by PM Erdogan will be accepted by the Turkish Cypriots. . Washington is actually interested in whether Serdar Denktas will go to Switzerland, and in the extent of support he will provide for a settlement. An American diplomat compares Serdar's position to that of Hamlet - he is stuck between his father and the future of his country. . It is clear that, compared with the Turks, Papadopoulos has been less than forthcoming with the position of the Greek Cypriot side. This has caused problems at the negotiations. Both Washington and the UN are worried about a possible Greek Cypriot refusal of the Annan Plan at referendum. . US officials remain optimistic that expectations on both sides on the island can be met to a certain extent."

"Arab-Kurd war"

Dr. Husnu Mahalli, a Syrian journalist writing regularly for the Islamist/opinion maker "Yeni Safak" claimed (3/22): "The PKK is the instigator of the riots in Syria. The organization is trying to prove to the US Administration that it still has influence in the region. The organization will attempt similar incidents in Turkey after the local elections. . Damascus now has a young leader determined to establish friendly relations with Turkey. Ankara view Bashar Assad as honest and sincere. Despite all the domestic and international obstacles, Assad has taken significant steps toward democratization and liberalization. Even while the US talks about democracy, human rights and freedom in its Greater Middle East project, the US is trying to prevent Syrian efforts in this direction. The US is actually against liberalization for Arab nations, because free Arab nations will get rid of their American collaborator administrations. The US is in partial control of the Arab world, and aims to control the whole region through the GME project. There is only one real obstacle left for the US: Turkey's friend Syria. Now the US is aiming to remove that barrier."

"The opposition void in Turkey"

Koray Duzgoren observed in the Islamist/opinion maker "Yeni Safak" (3/22): "The March 28 municipal elections will make it clear that the Republican People's Party (CHP) has severed its deeply-rooted ties with the nation. It can no longer be considered to be a serious opposition party. . It is very possible that the 'Democratic Unity' formed between the Social Democrat People's Party (SHP) and the pro-Kurdish Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) will replace CHP as the main opposition after the local elections. . Recent rallies organized for the Unity bloc in southeastern provinces like Cizre, Sirnak and Silopi, and even further west in Mersin, have shown enormous support for the movement. . The March 28 elections will probably introduce Turkey to a new opposition."

EDELMAN